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## THREE FAMOUS ITALIAN BRIGANDS.

A SHORT time ago the news went abroad in Rome that in the district of Viterbo the brigand Ansuini had been captured. Surprised by a patrol of carabinieri, after a lively exchange of shots, Ansuini, dangerously wounded, had fallen into the hands of justice. Unfortunately, this news was not true. But outside of Rome many people may have asked: 'What! do brigands still exist in Italy? Are strangers right, then, when even nowadays they insert the classic episode of brigandage in the programme of a projected trip to Italy?' This romantic institution has really disappeared from Italian soil, with the exception that there still exists, and at a short distance from Rome, a species of brigandage; and perhaps it will not be unacceptable to some of your readers to hear a few particulars of the history of the three remaining Italian brigands.

Ansuini, Tiburzi, and Fioravanti are the names of the brigands actually in the exercise of their calling. The last remains of a famous race, their names enjoy in Latium and on the confines of Tuscany a certain renown and an undeniable popularity. A few years back, they had a numerous band of associates. Death and the galley have by degrees reduced their number. Domenico Tiburzi, the most formidable of the three, was a cowherd at Cellere. In 1872, at twenty-five years of age, he had his first differences with the law—a highway robbery, an extortion, and a murder. Taken and condemned to penal servitude for life, in January 1874 he escaped from the salt mines of Corneto Tarquina. From then until now he has remained at large, eluding all efforts to capture him. The forest was and is now his refuge, his kingdom; there, between Civita Vecchia and Grosseto, in the wide solitudes of the *macchia*, he has lived for twenty years, defying the spies and the rewards offered by the public authorities. To any one familiar with the nature of the *macchia* this is easily understood. The word *macchia* (scrub or bush)

is here applied to regions that are really so inaccessible as to be unexplored and utterly inexplorable, abounding in glens, ravines, and treacherous precipices, the ground covered by a dense scrubby growth, surrounded by extensive deserts, where the wild horses gallop in freedom, and the malaria reigns supreme. The brigand who knows every corner of the *macchia* lives as securely as in an unknown island surrounded by the ocean. How many times has he seen from afar the glitter of the bayonets! How many times have the carabinieri passed, grazing the hedge where he was lying curled up! How many times, disguised and unrecognisable, has he descended into the village, and even into Rome itself, perhaps to enjoy a little variety and buy some powder and balls!

Tiburzi, strong in his refuge and in his terrible fame, which he takes good care every now and then to renew, lives—permit the expression—as a man of honour. He does not rob; he does not steal; he does not harm any one. He levies taxes after his own fashion. The wealthy of the neighbouring districts pay him every month a fixed contribution: money, wine, bread, weapons, and tobacco. In recompense he guarantees the safety both of their lives and of their property: in short, he acts as a kind of public guardian for them in the *macchia*. The relations between the brigand and the people are of a most friendly description. The poor when destitute of food come to Tiburzi; he also gives them coin, with which he is always well provided. Do not imagine that such amicable relations exist only with the poor and uneducated country-people. It is the rich landowners who pay most willingly the tax which brings them an entire security for their rural property. But woe to the spy! Sooner or later, be it from afar or near, the terrible hand of the brigand strikes him; and an atrocious vengeance rouses the authorities, and convinces the unbelievers of the existence of the legendary brigand. In this way Tiburzi lives. Seventeen different warrants hang over him; but, excepting the first crimes, the others are all for

acts of vengeance against supposed or dreaded spies.

In these eighteen years of hiding from justice, Tiburzi had several companions; but, less skilful or less fortunate than he, they have all perished. The last were Domenico Biagini and Luciano Fioravanti. In 1889, on the 6th of August, the three together were surprised by the carabinieri; a sharp fight ensued: Biagini fell dead. The other two succeeded in escaping into the unknown parts of the *macchia*, where they disappeared like spectres. They disappeared, but vowing vengeance. They believed the spy was a certain Raphael Gabrielli, land-steward to the Marquis Guglielmo, although the carabinieri have since declared it was not true. A year after, in June 1890, Gabrielli was overlooking the working of fifty reapers on the Guglielmo estate at Pozzatelli, about three miles from the Moutalbo Orbetello. At eight o'clock in the morning the reapers stopped for a few minutes to take rest and food. Two armed men suddenly issued forth from the side of the morass which bordered on the estate. One of them advanced to Gabrielli, and said to him: 'Get up and come with us.' The latter refused. The speaker seized him, and dragged him a few steps to where his companion stood ready with the pointed gun. Before that entire company of fifty persons, powerless and terrified, was the horrible deed perpetrated. 'Remember the 6th of August,' cried the avenger, as he fired two shots into the unfortunate man's brain. Tiburzi and Fioravanti reloaded their weapons, and crying, 'In this way spies are treated,' disappeared again into the morass.

Ansuini, the chief of another band of brigands, was born at Norcia, and is about forty-seven years of age. He worked first as a mason, and then as a chairmaker. He served in the 28th infantry regiment; and at the assizes of Spoleto, in 1875, he was condemned to ten years' imprisonment for theft. He underwent his term at Lecco and at Pianosa. Returning to his native district in 1885, he was, the following year, again before the assizes of Spoleto, charged with murder and highway robbery. He was condemned to death, the capital sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life, and he was transported to the penal settlement of Monte Filippo. On the night of the 9th or 10th of April 1890 he escaped in company with three other felons. At first they scoured the adjacent country, depredating, robbing, and committing numerous highway aggressions. Then, having lost in various conflicts two of his comrades, he succeeded—along with Giovanni Menichetti—in gaining his native territory, a district somewhere between Viterbo and Norcia. These two men became the terror of the country.

Ansuini is a man of medium stature, of a slight build, with chestnut hair and mild blue eyes. He can both read and write. When in prison, he was apathetic, but always exemplary in his conduct. He is not a ferocious man, such as brigands are popularly pictured; but he is instead as cunning as a fox. The escape from the settlement was due to his astuteness; the turnkeys say it was a real masterpiece of cunning. His was the head that planned; Menichetti's, the arm that executed. Menichetti, whom report paints as having been a man of a violent and

sanguinary disposition, was killed in June 1891, in the morass of San Magno, during an encounter in which also a brave brigadier of carabinieri lost his life. From that time Ansuini has lived alone. He also, like Tiburzi, organised a system of taxation, only that in his case the tax is voluntary; in other words, Ansuini, being a native of the place, always finds some one ready to supply him with food; and in case of danger, to give him a secure hiding-place. He, too, is implacable against spies.

Ansuini and Menichetti one time had plotted against a priest named Onesti of Viterbo. The plot failed, because Onesti, warned in time, was able to save himself. The bandits imagined that a certain Pasquale Signorelli had betrayed them. Shortly after, Signorelli disappeared, and his poor wife received a letter, signed by Ansuini, demanding two thousand francs for the ransom of her husband. The woman obeyed; but no one came to claim the desired sum, and Signorelli did not reappear. Three months after, on the margin of the morass, his unburied body was found. Ansuini had left a written statement to the effect that, having punished the traitor as he merited, he had no need of his money!

Besides these three principal brigands, in the last few years there have been others of minor importance, but fortunately they have been destroyed. The greatest contingent is always furnished by the escapes from prison; and it is easy to understand the reason why. But it is difficult to understand why these escapes are repeated so often, and above all, why prisoners are kept in the prisons of their own districts, instead of sending them to fulfil their sentences in others far distant, where it would be more difficult to escape; and even if they escaped, it would be impossible to evade pursuit. A short time since, five men succeeded in escaping almost miraculously from the works of the fort of Monte Mario. They all, except one, fell into the hands of justice, miserable, ragged, and dying with hunger, precisely because they were natives of other districts, and could not obtain any assistance from the people of the neighbourhood.

Heavy rewards are offered for the capture of the three principal brigands: ten thousand francs for whoever will deliver up Tiburzi; four thousand for Fioravanti; seven thousand for Ansuini. However, owing to the nature of the place and the peculiar system of brigandage practised up to the present time, all the efforts of the authorities have been in vain.

Many strange tales are told in connection with the adventures of these outlawed men. One day, it is narrated, a gentleman, one of the so-called tax-payers to Tiburzi, met him in the country. After the usual greetings, Tiburzi said to him: 'Oh! by the way, do you know that Spadini [the well-known Roman gunsmith] has a magnificent English repeating rifle: be kind enough to buy it for me.' The gentleman instantly promised to do so, but never thought more of the rifle or of Tiburzi, until, some considerable time after, he again encountered the latter. The thought of his forgotten promise suddenly flashed across his mind. In some trepidation, he was beginning to excuse his shortcoming, when the brigand affably anticipated him. 'Don't trouble yourself; I have already got

the gun,' he said, pointing to the weapon on his shoulder.

Another time, a company of hunters halted in a retired part of Viterbo. Whilst the supper was being prepared, a handsome man of distinguished mien came forward, and greeting the landlord, seated himself at the common table: he ate, drank, and took part in the general conversation, relating himself many spirited stories of the chase. He accompanied the hunters for a considerable distance on their way, and finally politely took leave of them. 'Who is that fine fellow?' one of the party asked the landlord. 'That is the famous Tiburzi the brigand!' he replied.

Thousands of anecdotes of this nature could be told. Contrary to the belief held by the majority of English people, the authorities, and especially the carabinieri, spare neither trouble nor risks to catch the offenders; but perhaps the proper men and the right means are not always adopted. Once, a dozen carabinieri were sent into a certain part of the country, all provided with new clothes and hats precisely similar, which ingenious disguise of course betrayed them a hundred yards off. Half an hour after their arrival, everybody in the country knew that the strangers were police in disguise. Another time, a well-known officer sent to take one of these brigands was furnished with the magnificent sum of four pounds to spend in lavish liberality!

Notwithstanding these facts, it is satisfactory to note that the conditions of public security are in a much better state than they were some years ago.

## POMONA.\*

### CHAPTER I.

But human bodies are sic fools,  
For a' their colleges and schools,  
That when nae real ills perplex them,  
They make enow themselves to vex them.

BURNS.

'I don't really see,' Dr Merridew said, scratching his head thoughtfully—'I don't really see how it is to be done this year, Sage. To be sure, there's been a lot of illness, and every one says the doctors ought to be making their fortunes; but, in my experience, it's always the poor people who are ill and require my services, while the rich go to a specialist. And then lodgings are so very expensive at this time of year, and the boys eat such quantities, bless them! at the seaside.—It is a remarkable thing,' went on the doctor, 'that just in the one point in which I could supply my family gratis—that is, medical advice—they never avail themselves of the opportunity; nor do they ever require drugs, which I could get at reasonable prices. I wouldn't mind betting, now, that bakers' children don't consume a quarter the amount of bread mine do; and butchers' families, on the same principle, are vegetarian. Such is the perversity of human nature! I think this year that, instead of going away from London, I will make up a few bottles of tonic, and they can have Tidman's Sea Salt.

Sage, who was used to her father's tirades when

holiday-time drew near, only sighed sympathetically, and went on darning a pair of serge knickerbockers that would be quite good enough to wear on the beach. There was so much of that sort of thing to be thought of before the annual exodus from London. If she had not been such a contented, happy, little soul, she might have wondered sometimes if the enjoyment was worth the bother. Even Dr Merridew himself did not fully appreciate how much was demanded at these times of Sage's wise, young head and busy, little hands. He thought, after the manner of men-folk, that when he had provided the sinews of war, which, joking apart, was not by any means an easy matter, there was nothing more to be done except just to pack up their traps and be off; and he did not recognise what a difficult operation that was with four happy, healthy creatures between six and twelve, who seemed to have a special talent for wearing out knees of stockings, seats of knickerbockers, and elbows of jackets.

It was not so very long ago that Sage herself had been one of these irresponsible beings, and sometimes, I am afraid, she had thought mother unnecessarily fussy, and too much absorbed in the mending up of sea-side clothing and the packing of boxes. Sage had small arrangements of her own then that seemed to her of infinitely greater importance than sand-shoes and jerseys. Her colour-box had to be reviewed, which in moments of reckless generosity she would sometimes lend to the boys to beguile a wet afternoon or tedious recovery from a cold—a generosity which she bitterly rued when the box was returned to her in a chaotic condition. Amidst all the manifold preparations, mother always found time to remember that colour-box, and reward the girl, for somewhat unwilling help over the mending-basket, with a hardly-spared coin from her purse, and with half an hour to run off to the big artist's colour-shop, which at that time contained everything that Sage thought worth living for at that period.

Sage often tried to persuade mother to save the money expended on the serge frock and neat, little sailor hat, which were always provided for Sage herself, and let her spend it on those brushes or sketch-book or paints, that were so much better worth having; and perhaps if Sage had been Mrs Merridew's own little daughter, she might have been persuaded to let the school frock or anything do; but fond of her as she was—and no mother could have been fonder—there was still that lurking feeling that people might think she let her step-daughter go shabbier than her own, which prevented her yielding to the girl's wishes.

Among all the stock characters of fiction, I think the bad step-mother is the one least often found in real life; and certainly Sage's experience was not exceptional, and it was only by extra fondness and preference shown to her that any difference was to be seen. Perhaps it was that kindness which it has been so truly said we do not show to those we really love. There is no feeling of kindness to those we love very much; when the love is less, the need of kindness comes in: a mother is never *kind* to her child, a step-mother is.

And so Mrs Merridew was very kind to Sage—

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so kind, that the motherless girl never felt for a moment the want of a mother; she never remembered or wished for anything better than the kindness that was so near akin to a mother's love. But when Sage was only fifteen, Mrs Merridew died, and then the time of kindness and tender consideration came to an end, and Sage herself stepped into the mother's place, and had to think and care for others, and put herself and her poor little paint-box quite out of sight. She had had dreams before that of an artistic life, having certainly a facility with pencil and brush that might have been called considerable talent in more appreciative circumstances. But father was too busy, and too much disposed to depreciate himself and all his belongings in a half-joking way; and mother, dear and kind as she was, and considerate, as we have said, in regard to filling the paint-box, knew nothing at all of such things, and was inclined to look as admiringly on Kitty's rudimentary ideas of a pig, a square object with a ringlet at one end and a nob at the other; or on Will's never-ending trains with much smeared smoke, applied with the end of the finger, as on Sage's more ambitious performances.

But when mother died, darning and cutting bread and butter seemed somehow to fill the place of drawing, and small household cares to blot out day-dreams.

If Sage had been ten years older, she would have been overwhelmed with the responsibility of her position; but at fifteen there is a blessed elasticity and power of recovery that every year lessens; and though she might shed a few hot tears over account-books that would not add up right, or lie awake for a few minutes, hot and indignant, over some piece of impertinence from the servants, or imagine dreadful possibilities when the boys were late in coming home from school, the intensity of such feelings did not last long and rankle, as it would have done in later years; the tears could be dried, and the account-books laid aside and forgotten; the indignation was slept away, and did not seem half so bad next morning; and nothing ever really happened to the boys.

Then, too, father was a very reassuring court of final appeal, though she sometimes wished he would take things more seriously.

'Won't come right, eh?' he would say; 'nor do my accounts ever. I never could make two and two come to four. Why should they? I daresay they don't in the planet Mars.—How much have you got left? That's the most important thing to find out. It's a mercy I have not to send in bills with all the items, or I should not have a patient left when they discovered the weakness of my addition.—One-and-fourpence-halfpenny wrong? Phew!—a long whistle—that's serious. I think putting it down as 'sundries' is demoralising; suppose we put it down as lost, in rather large letters. There is a virtuous feeling when one has confessed one's misdoings, and they are writ large.'

Then, again, about Mary Jane's misdemeanours; he was more amused than offended at her declaring as she weren't a 'eathen slave to clean two pair of master's boots in a day, as were that wore out as no gent didn't ought to wear them; and the last place as she was at the master wore

patent leathers and new constant—he *were* a gentleman. 'They *are* old,' he said, holding up one foot reflectively. 'Mary Jane is quite right. But they are desperately comfortable. I am not sure that I ever had a pair of patent leathers; only don't tell Mary Jane, or I might sink still lower in her estimation.'

Then, as regards anxiety over the boys, he used to laugh at Sage's grave little face, and tell her that when she had been married twice and had known what real trouble was, she would not be so inclined to forestall it by imagining what might never come to pass.

'You were the only one I was ever really anxious about, little wisdom. I had a fearful attack of indigestion when you were cutting your teeth. Nothing affects the digestion as badly as anxiety, and I developed distinct symptoms of heart disease when you had the measles, from pure agitation. It is mostly people who have no cause for anxiety who are the most anxious. The most easy-going, happy-go-lucky people are those who live on a volcano that may overwhelm them at any moment. If you come to think of it, what a silly thing anxiety is! There is no end to it, if you once begin. Only think of all the perils that surround us every time we go out, leave alone those we keep at home—infection from any one you rub shoulders with in the street, from every cab or 'bus or railway carriage—a falling chimney-pot, a runaway horse, a mad dog, even a bit of orange peel on the pavement, besides all the murderers and lunatics at large. Dear heart! one might live in a room of horrors all the time if one had the mind, without paying the extra sixpence at Madame Tussaud's.'

But at the time this story begins, Sage had had five years of housekeeping, and had attained the advanced age of twenty, and regarded herself as a very experienced person, and was so regarded also by the boys. Dr Merridew from the very first had deferred entirely to Sage, and had insisted on the boys doing the same; whatever she decided on was to be done, though sometimes his eyes would twinkle a little as he elaborately carried out a programme that was manifestly not the wisest. But this system had a very beneficial effect both as regards Sage and the boys, making her less positive and dictatorial, and them less disposed to set up their will against hers.

During these five years Sage had grown used to Dr Merridew's declaring every year the impossibility of affording a summer-holiday change, which nevertheless came to pass as regularly as the boys' holidays began; so this year she was not surprised to find, at the end of a tirade on the subject, that he had heard of a fishing village on the Dorsetshire coast which a friend of his had visited while on a walking tour, and that he had already written to ask if lodgings were to be had there.

## CHAPTER II.

So, by Atlantic breezes fanned,  
You roam the limits of the land,  
And I in London's world abide,  
Poor fotsam on the human tide.

W. WATSON.

'It's ripping!' Dennis announced authoritatively from the box as the overladen fly laboured up

the hill and came in sight of Scar, just a cluster of thatched cottages, with yellow-washed walls, and overhanging eaves, and little wooden porches, and deep-set lattice windows, standing irregularly on either side of a steep, little village street, running down to a cleft in the cliffs, whence a steep path leads to the beach below. There were red-sailed fishing-boats drawn up on the beach; and, beyond, a wide stretch of beautiful blue dancing sea.

Dennis had had dark misgivings that Scar would prove to be one of those stuck-up fashionable places where people dressed up and walked up and down to a band; but these fears were dissipated by the first sight of the rough, little street, and the group of fishermen at the top of the path to the beach, spreading out a net to dry on the wall, while two boys were bringing up a basket heaped with beautiful shining blue and green and silver mackerel.

That first sight of Scar reassured Sage, too, of her doubts of its being worth the trouble, which this year had seemed greater than ever, the boxes being more decrepit, the family clothes less calculated for hard sea-side wear, the servants more tiresome and untrustworthy, and Dr Merri-dew himself not very well, but making light of his ailments, as he always did, and calling his headache the result of over-eating, and his weariness laziness.

'If I could only stop with you!' Sage had said regretfully that last evening. 'I shan't enjoy it a bit while you are slaving away in London; and I know you don't really think you can get away to come down even for a Sunday. I do think people might not be ill on Sundays always, or Christmas Day, or just when you most want a holiday!'

'It would be a bad job,' said Dr Merri-dew wearily, 'if people were never ill when I feel inclined for a holiday!—a bad job for our bread and butter, I mean, whatever it might be for the public at large. But when my ship comes in, and we are not obliged to think of such vulgar things as bread and butter, but have turtle soup and champagne without even ringing the bell, then you and I, Sage, will go off together for a long holiday. Where shall we go? Somewhere sunny and bright and quiet.'

'Italy,' said Sage, with great eyes fixed on this wonderful, impossible future.

'Too far,' said Dr Merri-dew. 'What do you say to Hampstead?—There,' he added, 'that is just how your mother looked when I said something provoking, and pulled up our day-dreams short.'

It was only when Dr Merri-dew was tired or out of sorts that he talked to Sage of her mother and the short romance of his life, which twenty years of hard practical work, and a happy but very unromantic second marriage, had by no means blotted from his heart and tender memory.

'She was younger than you are now, Sage, and I was little more than a boy. When I see the wise and prudent young people of the present day who can't afford to marry, and who put what they call their love—save the mark!—to cool on a shelf while they are waiting for means to provide a fitting establishment for the poor delicate thing, I sometimes wonder if it can be the same sort of feeling that carried me and Olive

right through and over all obstacles straight into Elysium. Not that I advocate imprudent marriages; don't so misunderstand me, Sage; I should be the last to advocate such, who see so much of the misery that usually ensues; but I am bound to confess that my case was an exception; and neither Olive nor I ever regretted what we had done for a moment, though it cost us all our friends, and her all that women as a rule care for—position and fashion and a society life. But it was very short, little Sage—only a year. But if life went on for a hundred years, all pain and grief and work and weariness, which, thank Heaven! it's not or anything like it, I would gladly live it out for the sake of that one year.'

And then, when Sage was worked up to romantic enthusiasm, with bright eyes and flushed cheeks, he would say something painfully matter of fact—propose tripe for supper, or declare he had a flea hopping about him, and perform all sorts of grotesque wriggings and gymnastics, which made her laugh in spite of herself. But she was very loth to leave him this year; and she went away convinced that she should not enjoy herself a bit, and—the weather being hot and sultry, and the train crowded, and the children fidgety—she actually arrived at Shingle, the nearest station to Scar, with a headache, an almost unheard-of complaint, happily, in that noisy household at Dalston, and with such a white little face, that a gentleman offered to help her to carry some of the multitudinous parcels that had been added one by one to supplement the luggage, as various forgotten and indispensable articles turned up at the last moment.

'We'll carry it, Sage. Do let us take it—it will be so jolly useful on the beach.—Look here—Nigel hasn't anything to carry except his boat and the cricket things; he'll manage it.'

And so he did for the first ten minutes; but after that it was: 'Here, Sage, just lay hold of this for a minute while I get my knife out.'

And of course, when Shingle was reached, the whole party forgot everything but the fact of arrival, and pelted out of the train, leaving Sage to struggle with the various impedimenta.

'Oh, thank you,' Sage said to the gentleman who offered his help; 'don't trouble. The boys will carry the things.—Here, Dennis, Nigel, Will—come back directly!'

And the gentleman raised his hat and passed on with a smile at the unruly crew under the command of such a small, white, and yet determined little captain. He was a middle-aged man, with a kind, attentive face, that seemed to notice and be interested in everything, and with that particular cut, or want of cut, in his gray hair that betrays the artist; and when the fly passed him on the road between Shingle and Scar, the flyman touched his hat to him, and told Dennis that it was a painting gentleman, 'as lived up to Scar Cliff Farm and made pitchers.'

That first sight of Scar that removed Dennis's misgivings as to its being a fashionable place, also took away Sage's headache, and any doubts of its being worth the trouble, and the feeling of its being quite impossible to really enjoy anything without father.

'Don't worry your little head about me,' he

had said. 'Go away and enjoy yourself; and come back burnt as red as a lobster, if you want to be a comfort to your afflicted parent.'

She had shaken her head dolefully, feeling that loyalty demanded constant anxiety and harrowing thought; but that first sight of Scar, or perhaps it was that first breath of sea-air blowing up from that great stretch of sun-bright sea, with the refreshing smell of seaweed from the rocks left bare by the low tide, that swept away headache and anxiety; and she felt quite ashamed when she went to bed at night to remember how little she had thought of father all the evening. 'But I think he would rather I was happy.'

Scar is almost entirely inhabited by fishermen and lace-makers, many houses combining the industries, as might be known by a lobster pot at the door and a lace pillow with its bobbins in the window. Down one side of the village street ran a brisk little stream, bridged here and there by big slabs of slate; and a day or two of rain swelled it to quite a little torrent, which went rushing and tumbling down its stony bed, sweeping away the refuse of fish and cabbage stalks, which had a tendency to accumulate there in dry weather, until some public-spirited person turned to with a broom to clear the channel.

The lodgings engaged for the Merridews were about half-way down the street, and belonged to a widow, Mrs Rockett, the proprietor of the 'Black Dog,' the one little public-house of the place, opposite which modest hostelry the house was situated. The delight of the children knew no bounds when they found they were to have a regular fisherman's cottage all to themselves, with a kitchen with blue walls and a flagged floor, into which the door opened straight from the street; and with an open fireplace with a hook on which to hang the kettle; and a patch-work curtain to keep the smoke from blowing out into the room; and a black wooden settle; and a dresser, with plates and dishes of varying pattern and design displayed on it.

Behind this there was a little washhouse, out of which a very steep staircase led into the two bedrooms, whose principal furniture was two large four-post bedsteads without curtains. Washing was evidently intended to be done entirely down-stairs in the washhouse, as there was no provision made for it in the bedrooms; but Mrs Rockett prided herself on having provided elegant toilet arrangements for the young lady by having placed a very small looking-glass in the deep window of the front bedroom, with a crochet anti-macassar tastefully festooned over it.

'Mrs Rockett she know what the quality like, she do!' the admiring neighbours declared.

Mrs Rockett was a tall, stout woman, requiring a very long tape to fasten her apron where her waist was supposed to be, and with an unexpectedly soft and high voice, and a tendency to shed tears. In spite, however, of her mild manner and sentimental way of talking, she had managed to make her way as 'a widdier woman left with six little steps sudden like, through her poor, dear, 'usban' missing his way on the cliff after Shingle Fair, having maybe took a drop, though temprate in his 'abits most times.'

She had kept the 'Black Dog' respectable, though it bore a bad name in old days, and Scar men were reckoned quarrelsome in their cups.

She kept a couple of cows now, and owned some of the rough cliff pasturage, and made a good deal by selling out milk—which was a luxury unknown at Scar in old times—and sending butter and cream to the Shingle market in the season. She owned, too, as I have said, the cottage opposite; and as it was empty through the death of old Joe Gash, and as his son 'as were mate on a merchantman trading with the Injies, and weren't like to be home afore Michaelmas,' Mrs Rockett placed it at the disposal of the Merridew family, supplementing old Joe's furniture with additions from her own stores, and buying one or two things from a sale at Shingle; altogether producing what to her and the neighbours appeared a very elegant effect, though she modestly apologised to Sage on her arrival for the roughness of everything, 'as ain't what you're used to, Missy, and knows myself what gentlefolks 'abits is, through having lived general, before I married my poor dear 'usban', at Mr Thompkins the draper up to Coriton; and a good master he were, though hot-tempered; and a wife as never knew what a day's 'ealth was.'

Mrs Rockett was so very discursive in her conversation, that it is difficult to record any of her utterances without being led away from the subject in hand; and that first evening, the boys thought she was never going to leave them to the enjoyment of the plentiful meal spread out on old Joe's little round table, that tipped if you rested your elbows on the edge, and led to plentiful up-settings of tea, till the peculiarity was recognised and humoured. Another table was required to accommodate the party; so another, standing considerably higher, was pulled up alongside, and both covered with the same cloth, and covered with plates of various sizes and patterns and black-handled knives and steel forks and tea-things, and a mighty tin teapot, and such a dish of lobsters as no one had ever seen, even in the big fishmonger's in the City; and a great crusty loaf; and a roll of butter that made Sage's housekeeping hair stand on end at the notion of the boys helping themselves from such an unlimited supply.

'It is just perfect here,' she wrote to Dr Merridew that evening to announce their safe arrival; 'and butter is only tenpence a pound.'

(To be continued.)

#### NATURE'S SANITARY AGENTS.

It is Keats who speaks of the river performing its

Priest-like task

Of pure ablution round earth's human shores.

The authors of 'The Moon'—Nasmyth and Carpenter—claim that luminary also as a scavenger for the earth. Were it not for its aid, they point out, the estuaries of our rivers would become stagnant centres of corruption. Nature's scavengers, indeed, are many, and their work interesting. Not only are physical agents, such as the foregoing and others, enlisted in the work, but organic beings, plants and animals, likewise take their share in the work of preserving the purity and health of the world. The three

agents, wind, water, and fire, are constantly at work purifying the world we live in. A hurricane, bringing destruction in its train, may yet bestow the blessing of an atmosphere purified from disease germs. Wind lifts the stagnating effluvia from the swamp, and by attenuation and oxidation deprives it of its destructive powers; the ozone-laden breeze from the ocean brings health on its wings. It is the wind, again, which gives to the ocean a part of that motion which helps to preserve its own purity and make it a purifying agency. Without motion, water is powerless; the stagnant pool is a centre of corruption. The greater motion of the ocean is due to the influence of the moon, and thus the Queen of Night becomes a cleanser of the earth as well as a lamp to lighten it in the absence of the sun.

And as the purifying effect of the tides can be traced to the moon, so that of rains and rivers may be traced to the sun. It is the sun which gives the energy to the falling raindrop and the flowing stream. By its influence, water—in the form of invisible vapour—is drawn up everywhere from land and ocean. Thus elevated, it is in a position to do work, like the raised weight of the pile-driver or a wound-up watch—it is said to have potential energy. It falls down to the earth, and collecting from the higher parts, flows down to the lowest—the ocean—in obedience to that mysterious law by which every particle in the universe attracts every other particle. Thus the dust is washed out of the atmosphere, and the refuse swept up from the surface of the earth. And the water thus poured down from the clouds to wash the earth is water in its purest form. When the chemist wishes to obtain pure water for scientific purposes, he distils it. The sun and the cold upper regions of the atmosphere form together a great apparatus for distilling the water to be used in washing the earth. Water thus set in circulation by the sun, kept in motion by wind, gravity, and lunar attraction, is our great purifier: water has become the symbol of purification.

And there is no more effective sanitary agent than fire. The ancient who made his napkin of asbestos had but to throw it into the fire when soiled, and it could not be made cleaner. And could we but build our houses of incombustible materials, the spring cleaning might be efficiently accomplished by incendiarism. London, indeed, was purified from a plague by a general conflagration. And almost the one thing which that nearly indestructible disease germ, the bacillus, cannot stand is heat.

But if heat is a great purifier, cold is no less a preserver from decay. Amid the eternal snows of the Arctic regions, the unburied carcase may lie fresh and uncorrupted for months; the flesh of the mammoth, buried in the frozen soil of Siberia, has resisted decay for untold centuries. And here, perhaps, we have one of 'nature's hints to inventors'; for meat is now largely preserved by freezing.

Electricity is also a sanitary agent. When Professor Tyndall was experimenting with atmospheric dust in his classical researches on the origin of the lowest forms of life, he found that

an electric discharge passed through a dusty atmosphere purified it, by causing the minute particles to settle. And long before these researches, it was commonly said, and believed, that a thunder-storm purified the air. Thus a scientific foundation is found for the popular belief, and the lightning flash takes its place as an accredited sanitary agent.

It was, moreover, established by the above experiments that the germs of decay, of mould, and of fermentation, are in the atmospheric dust, and that if these are kept out by a filter of cotton-wool, an organic infusion may be kept intact. Such a filter, then, to sift out the germs becomes an important agent in preserving from decay. And the above discovery, that decay depends on pre-existing germs, opens out wide fields of research in preventive methods in general science and surgery which cannot be touched upon here.

When we come to organic life, we find that almost every great division of the animal kingdom allots to some of its members the task of purification. The jackal follows the lion, and clears away the offal left by the lordly and disdainful appetite of the king of beasts ere the relics of his meal can become offensive. A taste for 'high' game is not confined to man: the wolf will disinter the buried corpse. And the partiality of rats for sewers is well known. The lofty-soaring vulture spies from afar the carcase in the desert, and ere there is time for decay, it is devoured. The carrion-crow gets its name from its carcase-eating propensities.

Fish, again, are voracious feeders, and not fastidious. In the river, the eel devours the rotting carcase; the dace seems to live by choice where the sewer enters the stream, doubtless for the sake of the diet. Among the mollusca, the carrion-eating stromb and the whelk prey on the dead bodies of fish. The garden slug is not averse to a semi-decayed leaf, and may even be seen at times to feed on a dead earthworm.

Among insects, flies and beetles may be specially mentioned. The fly lays its eggs in meat, and the young devour the rotten mass; others feed on dung. Beetles lay their eggs on the dunghill, or laboriously roll up balls of dung in which to place them; in both cases the young feed on the dung.

As an example of sanitary precautions taken for their own sake, may be mentioned the case of the bees, which cover up with wax an offensive body which cannot be removed from the hive. The great sub-kingdom to which insects belong—the Annulosa—supplies other scavengers. The earthworm feeds on decaying leaves; many crabs feed on carrion.

Thus it appears that the function of a considerable portion of the animal kingdom is, like a party of scavengers, to scour the streets and lanes of the organic world in search of the refuse and offal of the great living community; and to find, moreover, their pleasure and their reward in the work.

The great function of plants in this part of the economy of nature is to absorb the poison, in the shape of carbonic acid gas, breathed forth by animal life. Decomposing this within their tissues, they return to the atmosphere the oxygen so necessary to animal life. Decaying animal

and vegetable matter in the soil is likewise removed by them.

Thus, while one aspect of nature is that of universal change and decay, the other is that of universal restoration and purification. Wind, water, fire, electricity, and organic nature, combine to sweep, cleanse, and make pure and sweet the house we live in. But while nature thus provides for the continual purifying of his abode, the task of keeping himself clean is left to man. Hence the necessity of the frequent reiteration of that time-honoured proverb, 'Cleanliness is next to godliness,' which, perhaps, ought rather to be written, 'Cleanliness is a part of godliness.' And yet, if nature does not compel cleanliness by forcibly washing her refractory children, as she does the house they live in, she both warns and invites. It is written in plain letters which all may read that cleanliness is health and life, and that dirt is disease and death; while the flowing river and the sparkling sea both invite us to enjoy 'the purest exercise of health.' And this natural law shines forth in letters of fire as one of the fundamental truths in the spiritual world.

### THE BURDEN OF ISABEL.\*

CHAPTER XXXV.—'HE THAT *will* BE RICH !'

(continued).

BUT there were reasons why George did not wish cheque-books and accounts and such-like trifles to be gone into then; he therefore proposed to his father that the serious business of lunch should be entertained first, since nothing of any consequence could be done before the luncheon hour must strike. His father looked at his watch, considered that he was hungry, and not at all aware that the fate of his house might be involved in his decision, he said: 'Very well. Let it be lunch first.'

George knew his father's good-nature and his affection for himself, and he set himself to interest and amuse him with other matters than those upon which they had trenched. His father had told him that he wished to get back to town that night, so that his mother might not be unduly anxious; and he was resolved that his father should go without seeing any books. He kept him as long as he could over lunch, and entertained him as richly as the elder would permit, and when he could keep him no longer, he made a bold proposal.

'You'll only tire yourself out, dad, before your journey, if you go into these things. Why not let me go through everything by myself? One person can do a thing like that better than two.'

'The second can check the first, my lad,' said his father.

'But the first can check himself,' said George, 'by going over it a second time.'

'Well, well, my lad,' said Suffield. 'Be it as thou wilt. But check thyself carefully, and let me know th' result by to-night's post. And these speculations o' thine—let me ha' a statement o' them as soon as tha conveniently can this week.'

Mr Suffield was not so foolish as to be deceived by his son's concern for his comfort: he saw there was something the young man would rather keep from him at present, and being a soft-hearted father, he was sorry for his son, and said to himself: 'I won't be hard on th' lad. He's my only son, and if he has made a mistake he shall have the chance of putting it right before he explains.' He had intended to return to London by the 'dining' train, but finding he could catch a train immediately, he went straightway to the station, while George returned to the office.

George set to work with energy to go through his accounts and to examine his private cheque-book—the only one to which, he thought, Daniel could have access—and tick off every cheque by the banker's passbook. He wrote to his father that night that he could not discover that Daniel had stolen anything but the plans.

Still George was uneasy, and he went about with his brows wrapped in anxiety; for he knew that his speculations in cotton, though only of a kind which he himself would call 'daring,' would probably be characterised by his father as 'reckless,' unless they were justified by their event; and their event was not yet; moreover, Gorgonio—with whom he had been the day before—was in low spirits, for prices were hanging at a very uninspiring level. But the first thing that seriously disturbed and shook him was the discovery that Tanderjee—to whom he had sent round an inquiry concerning Daniel—was 'gone away on business': his partner and compatriot could not say where! Where was the Parsee gone?—and why? He could not help thinking that his absence and Daniel's disappearance were more than a coincidence. The second disturbing thing was a piece of news that shook him like the blast of doom: it came from Gorgonio, and Gorgonio had thought it of sufficient importance to send it by a special messenger.—The steamer *Rohilla* had arrived in dock from Bombay with half that consignment of cotton on which Mr Suffield had last given Tanderjee a substantial advance; and Gorgonio and this messenger of his had gone and examined the cotton together—bale after bale—and Gorgonio regretted much to say that the cotton was rubbish!—and would not fetch twopence a pound!—Would Mr Suffield come and see it?

'Have you seen the cotton?' asked George of the messenger.

'Yes, sir,' answered the clerk.

'And you agree with Mr Gorgonio?'

'Quite, sir.'

'And of course you have been in the habit of sampling cotton?'

'For years, sir.'

'Then,' said George, 'I don't see why I should waste precious time at present in going to the Liverpool docks to look at it. Mr Gorgonio can look after it: perhaps it will prove not to be all so bad when it is fully examined.—Has Mr Gorgonio,' he asked suddenly, 'seen anything of Mr Tanderjee lately?'

'I don't know, sir,' answered the clerk.

'You don't know, then, that he has gone away nobody knows where?'

'Has he indeed, sir? That looks bad.'

'Why does that look bad?' demanded George.

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'Because this is the cotton just arrived that you favoured him with an advance for, sir; and I heard Mr Gorgonio say to-day that Mr Tanderjee would make a good thing out of it.'

'Then,' said George, 'your master suspects that Tanderjee may have gone away?'

'Very likely he does, sir.'

The native activity and pugnacity of George's character were becoming thoroughly roused. To suspect was to be resolved. He blew through the tube by his writing-table, and a clerk appeared from the outer office. 'Are the December cheques here or at Holdsworth?'

'Here, I think, sir,' said the clerk.

He went to one of a set of drawers behind George and produced a bundle of used cheques, which he handed to George. George undid the bundle, and found that cheque for £7500 which he had given to Tanderjee—it was endorsed 'for Jamsetjee and Mookerjee, Tanderjee.' Then he took from a drawer near him his bank pass-book, and compared the date of the cheque with the date when it had been paid: the latter date was but one day later than the former. Then he turned to his clerk, who was waiting his orders. 'Take this cheque,' said he, 'round to the bank and ask the cashier to be so good as to let me know how it was paid.'

While the clerk was gone on this errand, he wrote a letter to Gorgonio, saying that he was convinced Tanderjee had wilfully committed a fraud upon him, and was evidently gone off with the proceeds; but that he was determined to find him wherever he was; and that the cotton had better be sold for what it would fetch: if it was so bad, it would not count in the market, and therefore might serve them by inducing a rise of prices; but omitting all mention of Daniel's absence and offence. The letter finished, he gave it to Gorgonio's messenger and sent him off.

His own clerk returned from the bank with the cashier's answer to his demand: The cheque for £7500 had been paid to Mr Tanderjee in fourteen Bank of England notes for £500, and £500 in gold. That was doubly suspicious. Why had he taken so large a sum in gold?—and why had he not taken the usual means of transmitting part of the amount to Bombay?—unless he had from the first intended to levant. The next thing to do was to discover whether these fourteen notes for £500 each had been changed, and—if possible—to trace them, and so—by good luck, perhaps!—come at the whereabouts of the fraudulent Tanderjee. George looked at his watch: it was too late to ask the help of the bank that day.

But he turned to and went through his papers, and set his work all in order, as if in preparation for a long absence. Then he went home in a consuming fever of impatience and resentment, with plenty of time for reflection before him. Daniel, Tanderjee, and Gorgonio!—could it be that they had all been in league to deceive and defraud him? But no! He could not believe it of Gorgonio!—his fortune was too much bound up with his own. But Daniel certainly had been hand in glove with Tanderjee, and it was probable they had gone off together. But how had Daniel managed to get at the plans to copy them? He went down to the counting-house when he had reached home and made what examination

he could. He saw—as his father had seen—clear evidence of tracing over the plans; but nothing more could he discover.

Next day he was astir betimes. Leaving orders for certain portmanteaus to be packed and to be brought into town to meet a certain train, he entered the works while the early morning bell still rang. He went round carefully and saw that all occupations were making orderly progress, and then he took the chief manager aside and said a few words to him.

'I am going to leave you in absolute charge at present, Mr Johnson. I daresay my father will come down to-morrow or the next day. That black scoundrel Trichinopoly and Tanderjee, the Parsee merchant, have played the fool with me and bolted; and I am going to find them, if I have to follow them to the other side of the world!'

'Hadn't you better leave that to the police, Mr George?' said Mr Johnson.

'I can't leave it all to the police: besides, the police are too slow. This is between ourselves.—Good-bye, Johnson.'

When he had eaten a scrap of breakfast, he hurried into town and went directly to a telegraph office, where he wrote a message to Isabel, his affianced wife, requesting her to be at home as much as possible that day, because he *must* see her, though he could not say when. Thence he went to the bank, related his suspicion of Tanderjee, and begged them to make what inquiries they could concerning the cashing of the notes, and telegraph to him at his father's house in Rutland Gate, where he expected to be about three o'clock. He drew a hundred pounds in notes and gold, and then—after a flying visit to the office—he went to the railway station. In a minute or two he was embarked on his journey in a white heat of rage and resentment—rage and resentment against himself, as well as against others—which was scarcely to be distinguished from an intense calm.

(To be continued.)

## OLD SERVIAN CUSTOMS.

### A YEAR OF SUPERSTITIONS.

By GRANT MAXWELL.

WITH the smoke of the steamboats and whistle of the locomotives, many of the ancient practices and superstitions of the Slavonic races are passing away. The Servians are probably amongst the least superstitious of the peoples of South-eastern Europe; but in their villages farthest removed from the influences of Western life one may yet find much that is new to us; new because so very old. Elsewhere, I have described their chief household fêtes of Christmas, and 'Slava,' the fête-day of the family patron saint; and I now propose to follow through 'a year of superstitions' as practised in rural districts where neither the 'steam demon,' nor even the less modern 'school-house,' is yet an innovation on the 'ancient ways.'

New-year's Day is called by the Serbs the 'Little Christmas;' and the head of the roasted pig or sheep, which was the chief dish of the Christmas feast, is eaten on New-year's Day. A particular kind of cake is made for this day,

called in the cities and towns, 'St Basil's Cake'; but in the villages it is called 'the cake for the she-bear.' The evening is spent by the young people in various modes of divination, especially in forecasting their marriage future. Later on, I will describe several of these usages, which may be taken as typical of them all.

St George's Day, April 24th, is the favourite time for 'charming.' Old and young are alike addicted in some mode or other to this practice; and even the few individuals who are strong-minded, or sceptical enough not to actively employ 'charms' themselves, take great pains to prevent other persons obtaining occult influences over their persons or possessions on this day. On the eve of St George, the men make small crosses with branches of special trees, and the next day throw these crosses on all fields and vineyards as a protection against hail-storms. The maidens on the same evening gather field-flowers, some of which are dried and pulverised into snuff, as a cure for colds. Other flowers are steeped all night with branches of certain trees in water caught from the foam of a water-mill, preparatory for use in bathing next morning. Yet other flowers are formed into bouquets and used to divine which of their lovers are most sincere. Each maiden makes as many bouquets as she claims admirers, giving to each bouquet the name of an admirer. At midnight, she places these bouquets in the garden, or on the roof of her residence. Before sunrise, she hurries to see on which bouquet most dew glistens; for that bouquet will bear the name of her truest swain. Early on St George's morning all young people bathe: the young men in running water, as a safeguard against leprosy. The young women bathe in their own gardens, amidst bushes of roses, and of another shrub whose Servian name means 'lovely breath.' The girls who wish a 'white face' place their field-flowers mixture of the previous evening all night under a white rose-tree; while those who prefer rosy cheeks place theirs under a red rose for the night; and in the morning throw the mixture thus 'charmed' into their morning baths.

Maidens desiring to 'charm' otherwise lukewarm beaux select St George's Eve as the most propitious for their purpose. Making a bouquet of certain flowers, before placing it on the roof of their home, they adjure the bouquet thus: 'Oh flowers, my dear brothers, make — mad after me!'

Those who would ascertain, by the 'charm of the supper-table,' their destined husbands, put aside the first and the last crumbs of bread, bind these together with a piece of wood, and lay the whole under their pillows. The future spouse will appear in their midnight dreams; and as he may be away across the seas, the piece of wood is included in the 'charm' to serve him for a boat!

There are some less innocent 'charms' invoked on this wonderful St George's Eve. The dairy-women believe that on this night it is possible to cause, for the ensuing twelve months, the just product of their neighbour's flocks to flow into their own milk-pans; thereby not only doubling their own supply, but by the same act disabling a competitor. To effect this, the women must go before dawn, and entirely uncovered, to milk

the herds and flocks of the neighbour they hope to defraud. The farmers greatly dread this 'un-Christian charm,' and as a guard against it, smear their fences with animal manure.

In Servian towns, lamb is the usual roast for Easter Sunday; but in the country, most of the peasants do not taste lamb's meat until St George's Day.

In some Servian districts, every master of a household drives a lamb to church on this day, the lambs lying closely around the edifice while the men attend the service. A wax taper is lighted and fastened to the forehead of each lamb. At the conclusion of the service the officiating priest comes into the midst of the flock and recites a prayer for the prosperity of the pastoral pursuits of his parishioners. The lambs are then led home, killed, and roasted, their skins going as a perquisite to the priest.

The Serbs are addicted to sleep in the afternoons; but on St George's Day the most inveterate post-matutinal sleepers will manage to keep awake until nightfall, lest otherwise they should suffer from headaches all the year!

The Saturday preceding Pentecost is the chief day for remembering the dead. On this day the churchyards are filled with congregations. The priest hurries through the death registers. Mothers who have lost young children will not taste any fruit until they have distributed some amongst any children or poor people they may now meet; believing, if they do otherwise, that their own children in the other world will get no fruit there, and complain against the selfish parent who has forgotten them.

Pentecost is yet kept as a festival fully three days, although the authorities, and of late years even the Church officials, are endeavouring to lessen the period. Up to a few years ago, groups of fifteen to twenty young women in their best garments and covered with flowers, one carrying a white and red flag, another armed with a sword, passed from house to house dancing and singing mythological ballads. They were called 'The Queens' (Kralyize). But this custom can now seldom be seen, even in the most secluded hamlets.

From Easter Day to the following Sunday is the season called 'Zavetina.' Every Servian village, as a community, selects one of the days of this week to keep a peculiar festivity, going in procession with crosses and holy pictures through their cornfields and meadows, and resting before certain trees to hear prayers. These trees, growing in different portions of the village lands, are through a series of years visited on the same day in the same way. While the priests intone the prayers, all kneel, a posture the Servian peasant does not assume even in church more than twice or thrice in a year. After prayers, the parish priest and the mayor of the community renew with knives the cross which has been cut in the bark of each tree thus annually for many years. The procession moves from tree to tree, occasionally shouting loudly, 'Oh Lord, have mercy on us!' Sick persons, and especially sick children, are frequently laid on the ground, that the cross-bearers may pass over them; the peasant-women believing that such act, if it does not cure, will certainly improve the condition of the patients. Having made the round of the village lands, the

procession leaves the sacred pictures and crosses in the parish church. The household chiefs then dine together, under the presidency of the parish priest: the 'Kollivo' (baked and boiled and honeyed wheat) is served, and the Slava-cakes cut and broken in the orthodox 'Slava' methods, as this day is considered the village 'Slava.'

It is usual for Servian peasants, whenever they dine together, to forecast the future by the shoulder-bone of the roasted sheep or pig. The flat part of the bone is held to predict peace or war: if clear and white, peace; if rather dark, war. Near the upper end of the bone are some small holes, which are respectively called 'cradles' and 'graves,' and these, in various ways, are held to foreshow joy to some households and grief to others.

On the 15th of June, in some districts, all dresses and clothes are spread abroad, 'that the sun may see them.' On the eve of this day, the people generally gather a small red flower, steep it all night in holy-water, and use the water next morning as an eyewash 'to strengthen the sight.'

'St John's Day' (June 24th) is a grand anniversary for the Servian peasants; so august, that they say the sun arrests himself this day three times, out of fear and respect for the great saint. St John is peculiarly the patron of the shepherds, who, on Midsummer Eve, carry burning objects, made from the twigs and bark of a certain tree, thrice around their cattle-sheds and sheepfolds; then build large bonfires, and spend most of the night singing, springing now and again across the fires, and throwing aloft lighted branches.

The women make wreaths of a yellow field-flower called the flower of St John, and hang them on their houses. Even in Belgrade, the metropolis, can be seen on this day these wreaths adorning the fronts of many residences. In each wreath is intermixed a head of garlic, to be afterwards used in many methods of 'charming' away throat-swellings and other troublesome ailments. The maidens at this time peer in various ways into the future; such as throwing the white of freshly-laid eggs, or melted lead or wax, into shallow dishes of water, and by old, traditional rules, interpreting the forms the eggs, lead, or wax assume.

St Peter's Day (29th of June) is also a shepherds' festival. On the eve of this day, peculiar small cheeses are made, one for every member of the family, one for the parish priest, and two for the horns of the oldest sheep or cow.

St Elias's Day (July 21st) is held in great veneration, the peasants considering that lightning and thunder are under the control of this saint. They also say that St Elias and Mary Magdalene are brother and sister; and that Elias every day, for months previously, addresses Mary thus: 'Tell me, my sister, when my day comes, that I may also rejoice.' Mary always answers him: 'There are yet very many days to come and go before thy day arrives!' She deceives Elias thus until his day has passed over; because, if he knew his real day, he would keep it with such rejoicing that his lightnings and thunderings would smash the firmament and destroy the world!

From the 1st to the 15th of August the village women, and most of the men, strictly fast for 'the honour of the Madonna,' whose day is kept on the 15th with great solemnity, large crowds

congregating in and around the cloisters and churches.

Every church and cloister has a fixed, annual day—usually the day of the saint to whom the building is dedicated—on which is held what they call the Sabor, or 'the gathering.' Hundreds, in some places thousands, gather from far and near, many coming very long distances, on the evening before this festival, and sleep in fields and gardens near the church or monastery. After matins, dancing, singing, speaking, and cannon-firing continue until nightfall. Much business is transacted; flocks and herds change owners, new enterprises are inaugurated, and particularly new acquaintances formed to frequently issue in marriages. The 'Sabor' is also considered a good political school. Public affairs are freely discussed, and aspiring politicians utilise these 'gatherings' to the utmost.

Frequently, near young and joyous dancing groups, may be seen a smaller silent group of men with dimmed eyes and women weeping bitterly, because they have heard for the first time that since their last yearly meeting some valued relative or cherished friend has passed away.

Autumnal evenings are dear in the memory of every village matron. On these beautiful evenings, women of all ages, but still with the younger in the majority, meet at what they style 'Sela,' or 'sittings,' where they work together, knitting or spinning, with much singing and merriment. On these occasions the ancient crones entrust to new generations the household traditions relative to human life, and even more to the unseen life. Stories about fairies, witches, ghosts, vampires, miracles, find eager listeners; a weird or blood-curdling tale being quickly followed by some sweet sylvan song. These 'sittings' are held as long as the weather permits. When the cold winds and frosts terminate these open-air circles, the women of each household look eagerly forward to their chief winter festival, when the Baduyak logs shall blaze and scintillate on the Christmas hearth.

The Saturday prior to the 'Metrovdan' (October 26th, old style) is another of the 'Souls-days.' The churchyards are again filled with reverent villagers, the priests read the death registers and intone prayers for the dead, as on other days set apart for these solemn commemorations.

On St Barbara's Day (4th of December) a unique usage is observed. On the eve of this anniversary, a small portion of every species of grain is boiled all night in a pot over a wood-fire. Early in the morning the surface of the boiled grain is critically examined. Should the surface be uneven, it is thought a good omen; but if the surface be even, with occasional fissures, evil is prognosticated. After this investigation, a youth of the family is despatched with the pot and its contents to the river, spring, or well whence water is obtained for domestic use. He greets the water, throws into it three spoonfuls of the corn, and cries aloud: 'Oh God, give us honey and wax from flowers, dew from the heavens, grain and fruit from the earth; and of Thy mercy grant us health and joy!'

On his return home, the children and 'helpers' of the family sit down around the pot and partake of the remaining corn. This custom is called 'varize.'

The life of the Servian peasant may be crowded with superstitions, and often clouded with shadowy fears; but on the whole it is a joyous one, and much less irksome and wearisome than the existence of our Anglo-Saxon poor, so often uncertain of their to-morrow's bread.

### THE MONTH:

#### SCIENCE AND ARTS.

In his lecture before the Royal Geographical Society, Dr Nansen, in referring to the necessity of keeping his crew employed and amused during their long sojourn in the Polar regions, described a great many ingenious devices by which that want could be met. Many of these depended upon the electric current, and as the current cannot be obtained practically without a dynamo and steam-engine to drive it, the question of extra-fuel provision comes under consideration. Dr Nansen met the difficulty by proposing that there should be a windmill on deck, which should furnish energy to accumulators, and when wind failed, the men could operate a 'walk-mill,' which, while storing electricity, would serve a further useful purpose in giving exercise to the crew.

Messrs Blake and Franklin, of the Kansas University, have lately examined a number of Indians belonging to various tribes, with a view to find out whether colour-blindness was as prevalent among savage races as it is among more civilised peoples. The Indians examined consisted of nearly three hundred males, and about half as many females, both full and half bloods, belonging to the Pawnee, Cheyenne, and Pottawatonic tribes. The test used was Holmgren's with Berlin wool. Only three cases of colour-blindness were detected; but it was suspected, from the hesitation shown in the choice of the coloured skeins by some of the half-breeds, that in their case the sense of colour may be limited.

The progress made in alloying aluminium with other substances has (says a contemporary) brought this metal rapidly to the foreground. There seems little doubt that its future rôle will be both important and significant. It is only quite lately that the alloy of aluminium with antimony has been known. We owe this to the work of Roche, who obtained it by melting the latter metal in a Perrot's oven, stirring the melted metal with an aluminium rod. In this way the temperature being gradually increased, it was found that an alloy was formed consisting of 18·37 per cent. of aluminium and 81·63 of antimony. Unfortunately, the properties of this product showed at once that for industrial purposes it was practically of no value; so that further research was required to investigate whether, by combining it with still a third metal, more satisfactory qualities could be produced. The results seem to have been rewarded with great success.

There seems a likelihood that 'villainous saltpetre' will speedily become a thing of the past, and it is possible that many now living may see gunpowder exhibited as a curiosity in our museums. The explosive which will probably take its place in warfare is known as Cordite,

which is a compound of nitroglycerine, gun-cotton, and mineral jelly. Experiments lately carried out at the Government proof-butts at Woolwich show that in many respects cordite is superior to gunpowder. In one case, a six-inch quick-firing gun loaded with fourteen pounds of cordite was found to give a higher velocity with hardly any increase of pressure on the gun than when it was loaded with double that weight of black gunpowder. A more important point is that the new explosive causes no erosion in the gun-tube. Cordite has the appearance of long pieces of thin black or gray cord, and it is being manufactured at the Government Powder-mills at Waltham Abbey. It is not yet known whether it will keep so well as gunpowder.

Soapstone, or Steatite, which is manufactured by the Chinese into miniature pagodas and other ornaments, is found in the neighbourhood of Wen-chow, and our consul there has recently given an interesting account of the mines and the people by whom they are worked. The hills containing the mineral are owned by twenty or thirty families, who lead a hard life, living in straw huts on the hill-sides. The steatite is principally valued according to its colour, after which size and shape come next in importance. Purple, mottled-red, black, blue, and gray are all valued; but the greatest store is set upon the steatite which is perfectly white. The industry finds employment for about two thousand persons, including both miners and carvers, and a great impetus has been given to it since Wen-chow was opened up to foreign trade. Steatite is much used in the manufacture of gas-burners, for although a soft stone, it will withstand heat to a wonderful extent.

In a paper read before the Franklin Institute (Philadelphia) on the Causes of Fires, the author, Mr C. J. Hexamer, devoted some attention to the dangers arising from employing inferior petroleum for lamps, and he remarked that in order to be safe it should have a flash-test of at least one hundred and thirty degrees. By non-technical listeners this caution would not have been readily understood unless the lecturer had given directions for testing the oil by flash. As the information may be valued by others, we reproduce it. The oil can be readily tested by pouring it upon some sand in a vessel which will stand heat. A thermometer is placed in the oil, and heat is applied to the outer receptacle. At the same time an ignited taper, with the smallest possible flame, is held above the oil, but is not allowed to touch it. The temperature of the oil is accurately observed, and if the vapour from it flashes before the mercury rises to one hundred and thirty degrees, it is unfit for household use.

The 'Pioneer Mail' of India lately recorded a case which seems to indicate that there is some foundation for the common belief that if a cobra be killed and its remains are left in a bungalow, snakes of the same species will be attracted to the place. The story goes that about a year ago the occupant of a bungalow at Dinapore killed a large cobra, which was duly stuffed and set up as a trophy. Since this event no fewer than eight large cobras have been killed there, one of them being found sitting up, with hood extended, looking at the house, and the others making towards

the premises. It is a curious fact that no cobras have been seen in other parts of the station.

At the Marine Biological Laboratory at Plymouth some experiments have for the last two or three years been in progress, the object of which has been to determine whether or not the dark coloration on the upper side of flat fishes is due to the action of light. In order to settle this question, several plaice, turbot, &c., were put into tanks covered at the top, but with light reflected from below by means of mirrors. Under this treatment it was found that the white under-sides of the fish gradually became spotted, and that these spots amalgamated until the entire under-skin became dark. Photographic records have been made of these gradual changes, and the pictures are full of interest.

The 'Chemical Trades Journal' gives an interesting account of the various industrial uses of the comparatively new substance known as Silicate of Soda, or Water-glass. It is largely used in the manufacture of cheap soaps, and can be usefully employed in cleansing all kinds of articles when the action of caustic soda is too energetic, and when ordinary washing soda is not strong enough. As a case in point, the greasy cotton waste used by Continental railway companies is recovered by its aid a dozen times; while formerly, when caustic soda was employed, it could only be renewed two or three times. Silicate is also a substitute for caustic soda in the bleaching of jute and hemp waste for paper-making, and is used for waterproofing paper. It is a fixing agent for alumina and other mordants in cotton; it will render textile fabrics incombustible; it enters largely into the manufacture of artificial stones, of enamels, and paints; it is employed for rendering timber fireproof, and walls waterproof, and has many other applications in various arts and manufactures.

Lieutenant H. R. Sayce recently crossed the English Channel in a boat only eight and a half feet long, with a beam of thirty-two inches, and with a total weight of only thirty-five pounds. The little vessel was covered with canvas, which fitted tightly round the body of its adventurous occupant, but left his arms at liberty to work his paddles, his progress being further helped by a couple of small sails. The boat is apparently on the Berthon principle—that is to say, it is inflated with air, is collapsible when not in actual use, and is regarded as being unsinkable. The boat in question made its journey from Dover to Boulogne in fourteen hours.

All machinery in which cog-wheels are employed must necessarily be rather noisy, and great ingenuity has been expended in reducing the noise as much as possible. A new departure has been made by an Austrian firm by the introduction of toothed wheels made of pressed raw hides, which are designed to work in conjunction with wheels of cast-iron, steel, or other metals. The new wheels are said to be strong enough for the purpose, to require no lubricating, and to reduce vibration materially.

At the Conference recently convened by the Museums' Association at the Zoological Society's rooms, London, several papers of interest were read and discussed. Among these was one by Mr R. Newstead of Chester, 'On the Use of Boracic Acid as a Preservative for Bird-skins.'

With great confidence he commended this agent to taxidermists, and said that during the past three years he had preserved no fewer than three hundred skins with it, and had found that it was efficacious even on such large skins as those of swans and geese. He also spoke of its value as a fish-preserver.

The recent terrible collision of two war-ships, by which so many valuable lives were lost, has naturally called attention to appliances by which life may be saved under similar circumstances. Mr Adey, of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, has invented what he calls a 'Combined Ship's Buoy.' This apparatus consists of a hollow copper shell constructed with water-tight compartments, which is practically unsinkable. It is designed to be carried on a steamer's bridge, and is connected by a stout wire-cable to a revolving drum beneath the ship's deck. In case of the vessel foundering, the buoy would immediately become detached from its supports, and would when it touched the water automatically discharge rockets and blue-lights, while at the same time it would sound a bell and throw out cork-supported life-lines. Even if all these measures failed to save life the buoy would indicate the exact position of the wreck, and would therefore make salvage operations possible. The inventor will supply all particulars if he be addressed at 12 Clare Street, Bristol.

The art of refrigeration and carriage of dead-meat has now arrived at such perfection that the best brands of New Zealand mutton can hardly be distinguished even by experts from the finest Southdown. It is therefore not uncommon for the foreign meat to be sold as British, to the great profit of the trader and to the prejudice of the buyer. A Committee of the House of Lords was recently appointed to consider the question whether it would not be to the interest of honest traders and their customers that foreign meat should be marked, and it was quickly found that the chief obstacle to the proposal was an effective method of making the mark without spoiling the meat. The problem seems to have been solved by branding the meat by means of a platinum wire brought to a white-heat by electricity.

According to Professor Uffelmann of Rostock, cholera bacilli can be easily conveyed from place to place by the postman. After infecting an ordinary letter with the bacilli, he put it into a postbag, and found, after twenty-four hours, that the organisms were still living. On postcards they remained in an active state twenty hours after infection; but they died rapidly on coins. Flies also he found were most effective carriers of cholera bacilli, an infected insect causing a piece of beef upon which it alighted to swarm with living organisms. The lesson to be learned from these experiments is that of scrupulous cleanliness. At the same time it stands to reason that unless there was some natural antidote to this wholesale dissemination of deadly organisms, human life on this earth must have long ago ceased to be.

It has been suggested that, instead of taking so much pains to stamp out cholera by quarantine restrictions, the evil should be dealt with at its point of origin. This is believed to cover a region of about eight thousand square miles at the mouth of the river Ganges, and to

be caused by the amount of animal and vegetable putrid matter which is allowed to collect in the water there. The sacred Ganges has for years untold been used as a cemetery, and the custom would possibly be difficult to eradicate; but the natives might be compelled to cremate their dead before consigning the remains to the river. It is doubtful, however, whether a disease which has travelled so far from its country of origin can be thus eradicated. The idea savours somewhat of the still prevalent notion that the best remedy against risk from dog-bite is to kill the animal which caused the injury.

Japan, says the 'Revue Géographique,' is especially rich in mineral springs of a therapeutic value, and the people are fully alive to the benefits of taking advantage of these natural remedies for various ailments. These mineral waters may be divided into four classes—sulphur, saline, alkaline, and ferruginous. In many cases the Japanese employ the water in the form of a douche, and will place themselves under cascades for the purpose. One spring which is highly valued emerges from the ground perfectly clear and limpid, almost tasteless; yet it is strongly impregnated with sulphuretted hydrogen, and soon becomes clouded and deposits sulphur. These waters are beneficial in cases of muscular and chronic rheumatism, and for certain skin diseases. Hot springs also abound in Japan, as might be expected in a country in which volcanic energy is so constantly active.

One of the most interesting relics of Old London is St John's Gate, Clerkenwell, which, because it does not happen to lie in one of the main arteries of the big city, is not so well known, even to Londoners, as it should be. It is the only remaining portion of the important Priory of St John, which dates from the fourteenth century. The old gateway has a literary interest attached to it, for in the room above the archway Dr Johnson worked for Cave the printer for a small weekly stipend; and the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' which to this day bears a picture of the archway on its cover, was first printed here. The archway had latterly become much defaced and weather-worn, but it has recently been restored as a memorial to the late Duke of Clarence, who was first Sub-prior of the Order of St John. The Order as now revived embraces the St John Ambulance Association, and is busy in other good works.

A demonstration was lately given of a new electro-cyanide process for separating gold from difficult ores—that is, ores associated with sulphur, iron oxide, antimony, zinc, &c. Hitherto, the presence of these undesirable substances has caused the mercury used for amalgamation to become dirty, or sluggish, and incapable of seizing the particles of gold brought into contact with it. In the present process, an apparatus is employed by which all difficulties seem to be surmounted by combined chemical and electrical action. It is the invention of Mr J. B. Hannay, who has devoted many years to its elaboration. By this appliance the precious metal is extracted from the ore without any preliminary treatment other than crushing. The chemicals employed are used over and over again, and the gold and silver are obtained from the amalgam at once in the

metallic state. Any workable quantity of ore may, it is said, be treated in one vessel and at one operation, and the gold obtained from it the same day. The demonstration was given by the Universal Gold Extraction Syndicate of 73 Basinghall Street, London.

Any one who has watched the operation of coaling a vessel—say a Channel steamer—with its files of men, each black as the burden which he carries, must have been struck with the waste of labour and the unnecessary dirt that the work seems to entail. In an age when so many much more difficult processes are carried out by machinery, the method seems ridiculous and clumsy. Mr M. J. Paul has invented a system of coaling by which time is saved, dirt is prevented, and a great economy of labour secured. The coal is conveyed from vessel to vessel on the dredger principle, the conveyer of the material consisting of an endless steel chain, to which is attached a number of bucket-shaped steel plates. This conveyer can be altered so as to suit the height of the ship which is being coaled, and it dips into a barge of special design by which the coal is brought within constant reach of the travelling buckets. A demonstration of the working of this new system was recently given at Rotherhithe before an assembly which included representatives of the Admiralty and of several steamship companies. On this occasion, one hundred and twenty tons of coal were embarked in seventy-five minutes, the ordinary rate of bunkering coal by manual labour being about eighty tons per day.

The results of scientific observations made during the Antarctic expedition which recently returned to Dundee are said to be of an important character, but there is much as yet to be done in collating and arranging the notes made. We are informed by the 'Dundee Advertiser,' which has published singularly comprehensive articles concerning the expedition, that Dr Donald, who acted as surgeon on board the 'Active,' had collected a large number of birds, mosses, and eggs indigenous to the Antarctic regions. Seven distinct varieties of penguins were observed, and specimens of four of these have been brought home. The other birds are very interesting to the naturalist, and are said to include at least one entirely new species. Skeletons of the different classes of seals have been preserved, and will probably be sent to the principal museums.

#### A CHAT ABOUT WHALES.

STEAM and the screw-propeller have lessened the whaler's dangers; but 'the fish' are apparently more shy than in the good old days, and certainly more scarce. Whales were frequently killed before they had reached maturity, and this indiscriminate destruction of old and young left unstocked grounds. Hence some of our whalers have again attempted to woo fickle fortune in the lone Southern Ocean. This is not a new departure, for many years ago Messrs Enderby established a whaling colony at the Auckland Islands, about one hundred and eighty miles south of New Zealand. Her Majesty's ship 'Havannah,' with a dozen other vessels, took live-stock and

supplies thither from England and elsewhere; and several schooners from Australia put in an appearance with various kinds of goods for sale to the workmen congregated at this out-of-the-way place. Everything was taken into consideration save the weather, which proved most inclement; and the venture failed utterly. In December 1842, Ross saw many huge whales near Darwin Islet, six hundred miles from the Falklands. They were so tame that the ship almost touched them before they would move.

Excessive estimates of a whale's bulk are met with occasionally; one measuring a hundred and fifty feet in length probably belonged to prehistoric times. Milton's words are apposite in this connection:

There leviathan,  
Hugest of living creatures, on the deep,  
Stretched like a promontory, sleeps or swims.

Captain David Gray of Peterhead, a mighty hunter of whales, seems to favour the more moderate view, that the average size of a full-grown Greenland whale does not exceed sixty feet. Whales, if unmolested, attain to a ripe old age; and may, for aught that is known to the contrary, become crabbed centenarians. In 1890 the crew of an American whaler, the 'Beluga,' are said to have killed a large whale in Behring Sea, in which was discovered a harpoon bearing the name of another whaleship, the 'Moctezuma,' of sixty years previously; thus proving that the whale had carried the iron with it during the threescore years. Captain David Gray once killed a very large female whale having a harpoon embedded in her blubber, which had been in position for thirty years, as evidenced by the date it bore.

A detailed description of these curious cetaceans would occupy more space than is at our disposal; but a few eventful experiences with scattered members of the family at various times will not be without interest. Sindbad the Sailor is responsible for a whale-story which, if not true, has at least the merit of being well told. Reclining motionless upon the sea-surface, this denizen of the deep was mistaken for an islet. Its grass-covered back resembled a verdant meadow, and the hardy toilers landed thereon to stretch their weary limbs after the manner of pious Æneas and his followers. Suddenly the slumbering cetacean sank beneath their feet, and great was the amazement thereat.

More reliable instances of whales confounded with rocks are not far to seek. Admiral Sir F. Beaufort ran his smart frigate into the River Plate in 1807 with studding-sails set below and aloft. An uncharted rock was reported right ahead; but sure of his position, no alteration was made in the course steered. Barnacles, breakers, and long weeds, were soon plainly observable; yet, when the ship's sails flapped with a loud noise, this supposititious rock disappeared. It was but a whale having his post-prandial forty winks. Weddell in his voyage towards the South Pole in 1822 mistook the swollen carcase of a dead whale for a half-tide rock.

It is said that the crew of an American schooner, the 'C. H. White,' had an exciting adventure not

long since on the Oregon coast. All hands save cook and captain were away in small boats halibut-fishing, when a large school of whales passed their ocean home. One of these unwelcome visitors collided with and broke the cable that held the schooner to her anchor. Becoming entangled therewith, he towed the helpless vessel in divers directions for six hours. Eventually, he succeeded in effecting his escape, and dived deeply out of sight. Something similar happened still more recently to a whale of an inquiring turn of mind. A Brazilian submarine telegraph cable was found to work badly about seventy miles from the land; and upon being hauled to the surface for repairs, the dead body of a large whale was discovered caught by the cable, which was twisted into most complicated knots.

The immense jawbones of a whale have not only served to stop a chink after decay, but also to form the gateway of a rustic garden when in good condition. The Emperor William of Germany has ordained that the bones of whales killed during his whaling expedition last summer shall be made into furniture for his boat-house at Potsdam. A German lady is to paint a description of the incidents of the chase upon the shoulder-bones of the slaughtered cetaceans, so that they may ornament the interior of the boat-house together with the numerous photographs taken during the expedition.

In January 1856 the sailing-ship 'Fusilier' was in 25 degrees north, 48 degrees west, about ten o'clock one morning, when her commander, Captain Carmichael, was surprised by a rumbling noise like that of an earthquake. The ship trembled throughout her whole length, causing the alarmed watch below to seek safety on deck without delay. This shock was repeated no fewer than a dozen times, at intervals of two minutes' duration. Soon two enormous whales appeared from beneath the ship, swam lazily about, blew several times, then went back to their retreat, and repeated the performance. It is probable that they found unalloyed satisfaction in rubbing themselves on the shells which adhered in clusters to the iron bottom of the 'Fusilier.'

In February 1875, the sailing-vessel 'Albertine,' Captain Owen, struck something considerably harder than water one foggy night while travelling five knots an hour in 42 degrees south, 75 degrees east. The officer in charge of the watch, somewhat scared, observed a line of foam on the port bow, and was about to alter her course, imagining that she had touched on an unknown shoal. Thereupon, a whale thrashed the water with his flail-like tail, snorted loudly, and sped swiftly to windward. He had doubtless been sleeping peacefully until aroused with scant ceremony by the vessel's advancing stem, and then stood not on the order of his going.

The iron barque 'Elissa,' in 1887, while crossing the South Indian Ocean, ran right into a whale. She escaped injury; but the whale fared badly, as it was afterwards seen floundering about astern in a dazed condition. An infuriated cetacean attacked the whaleship 'Essex' with fell intent, smashing in her bows, and causing her to founder. The crew took to their boats; but only a few enfeebled survivors reached the nearest land, after an awful experience of many leaden-footed hours. Strange to relate, another 'Essex' was seri-

ously damaged by a vicious whale near Zanzibar in 1887.

The steamship 'Petersburg,' of the Russian volunteer fleet, had a unique experience near Minicoy, in the South Indian Ocean. A sharp shock was felt by all on board, and she stopped, as though gripped in a vice. The sea was found to be coloured with the lifeblood of two huge whales, which lay floating in their last agony. One was cut through by the steamer's sharp stem, and the other killed by repeated blows of the screw-propeller.

The German steamship 'Waesland,' bound from Antwerp to New York, ran into and killed a sleeping whale. A smaller steamer, the 'Kelroe,' collided with a whale near Seaham Harbour, and wounded it badly. The celebrated yacht 'Genesta' narrowly avoided collision with a dead cetacean during the Jubilee race round our islands. In 1889 a Shields steamship, the 'James Turpie,' nearly cut a whale in two one starlight night. The schooner 'O. M. Marrett' was almost wrecked by passing whales in the North Atlantic. Many of the school struck her repeatedly with such violence that her whole hull shook, and articles in the officers' rooms were thrown to the floor.

In 1890 a small sailing-vessel, the 'Ocean Spray,' bound from Galveston to England, struck a sleeping whale, and received damage. On the morning of the 17th July, a whale fifty feet long made his appearance close alongside the steamship 'Port Adelaide,' Captain C. M. Hepworth, R.N.R., in 42 degrees south, 75 degrees east. He followed the vessel for four days, never more than seventy yards away, and generally close astern, much to the edification of numerous passengers. He threw up the sponge in 41 degrees south, 97 degrees east, after travelling nine hundred and eighty statute miles, certainly without resting, and apparently fasting. In November the ship 'Earnock,' Captain Parson, was under sail in 29 degrees south, 21 degrees west, when a large whale lashed the sea into foam with his tail, so near the ship that the chief officer, who happened to be below forward, came quickly on deck to see what had happened. He actually felt the impact of the water against her bows.

In June 1891, while Her Majesty's ship 'Immortalité' was steaming from Arosa Bay to Gibraltar at the rate of twelve knots an hour, she stopped short, as though a submerged danger had been located. It was presently found that she had cut deeply into a whale, and it became necessary to go astern in order to get rid of the encumbrance. Four months later, the Anchor line steamship 'Ethiopia' collided with a whale when about eight hundred miles from New York. One hour before noon, Captain Wilson and Second-officer Pife were on the bridge, and noticed this whale rise to the surface only a few feet ahead of the swiftly-moving steamship directly in her path. The 'Ethiopia,' steaming sixteen knots an hour, crushed into the cetacean, and the suddenness of the shock almost caused a panic among her passengers. She seemed to cut him completely in two, and a crimson wake was left as far as the eye could distinguish astern. In December the barque 'Rokeby Hall,' near Valparaiso, 33 degrees south, 73 degrees west, was gliding gaily along towards her port before a fair

wind, with smooth water beneath and a bright sun overhead. A whale about sixty feet long, moving in a direction at right angles to the barque's track, struck her just amidships. The 'Rokeby Hall' escaped unhurt, although the blow was dealt directly on the water-line with an awful momentum; but the whale was last seen apparently lifeless, and the water in the vicinity was red with blood. This collision may have been purely accidental, and perchance due to the unfortunate whale's defective vision.

In June 1892 the Cunard liner 'Aurania,' Captain H. Walker, passed so close to a large whale in 48 degrees north, 31 degrees west, that her stem only cleared it by a very short distance. In September the White Star liner 'Germanic,' Captain Cameron, when in 47 degrees north, 46 degrees west, cut a whale down as it lay in a deep sleep upon the sea-surface.

Man has been the relentless foe of these harmless but marketable creatures from very early days. The fearless Biscayan put forth against them in nutshell navies; larger vessels followed them still farther into the icy fastnesses adjacent to the North Pole; and steam-whalers have penetrated where not many years since Arctic discovery-ships found it difficult to reach. Propagation of the whale species was ruthlessly deemed unworthy of consideration by competing whalers, and unless the whale's shyness had increased, causing him to retreat into less accessible waters, it is not improbable that he would have become as extinct as the dodo. A close-time for whales might have some effect in counteracting the fierce greed for gold regardless of the future.

#### A SUMMER NIGHT IN MANIKA.

LIKE one of that all tender Sisterhood,  
Who seem as angels in the fainting sight  
Of wounded warriors, who have bravely stood  
The charge of foemen, in the day-gone fight;  
So with her star-lit cross, refreshing Night  
In mantle gray steals forth, as if she would  
Exhausted Nature recreate, with dreams  
Of cloudy skies, cool winds, and running streams;  
While spreads attendant Moon her silver light  
Soft o'er the weary camp, that still and white  
Now sleeps, secure, behind a guard of trees,  
Kept ever wakeful by the whispering breeze,  
Lest aught should find them in unwatchful mood,  
Pass through their lines, and break the solitude.

CHARLES MURRAY.

#### \* \* TO CONTRIBUTORS.

- 1st. All communications should be addressed to the 'Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.'
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